



OFFICE OF THE
COMMISSIONER

UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20555

October 2, 1981

P. Kitchuck
1720 Camden Ave., #3
W. Los Angeles, CA 90025

Dear P. Kitchuck:

Thank you very much for your letter regarding Diablo Canyon. The recent Commission decision authorizing low-power testing and fuel loading is only the first step in Commission review of this plant. Specifically, the earthquake-related issues that distinguish Diablo Canyon from most other nuclear units have not yet been addressed in detail by the Commission. They will be reviewed before operation above five percent power is authorized.

While it may have some symbolic importance, a decision to authorize low-power testing poses very little danger to the public. The power level is so low that the operators have more than ample time to react to any problems in the plant, and the amount of radioactivity existing in the core does not begin to build up until the plant has operated for quite a while.

Aside from the fact that the Congress has passed legislation indicating that nuclear plants are to be licensed if they meet the applicable standards, my own willingness to license individual plants rests on the perception that they are no more risky than other methods of providing equivalent electric power. Furthermore, on the basis of the evidence to date, they seem to be far less risky than the automobile, which is responsible for some 50,000 deaths per year. Of course, none of this justifies building power plants where they are not needed, and I have done what I can to correct the NRC's unacceptable past analyses of the need for power question.

I have enclosed two documents that may be of interest to you. The speech is self-explanatory. The other is in response to a petition filed by a person seeking to shutdown all nuclear power plants. It sets forth the NRC's rationale for denying the petition. That denial is currently being appealed to the courts.

Sincerely,

Peter A. Bradford
Commissioner

8805060049 880418
PDR FOIA
HAMLIN87-444 PDR

Enclosures

D/18